

**RESOLUTION OF BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
FINDING THAT THE GOVERNMENT CENTER PROJECT AREA  
IS A DECADENT AREA**

---

WHEREAS, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (hereinafter called the "Authority") is a public body corporate and politic duly organized and existing under the provisions of the Housing Authority Law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and having a usual place of business in the City of Boston, Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has, with financial assistance provided under Title I of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, by the Housing and Home Finance Agency of the United States of America, undertaken and conducted surveys, studies and inspections of an area in the City of Boston known as the Government Center Project Area and described in Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part hereof (hereinafter called the "Project Area") in connection with the preparation of an urban renewal plan therefor; and

WHEREAS, with the consent of the State Housing Board and the City of Boston acting by its Mayor with the authorization of its City Council, with the approval of said Housing and Home Finance Agency and pursuant to a Temporary Loan Contract under said Title I, the Authority, as provided by law, prior to the completion and approval of the urban renewal plan for the Project Area has conducted so-called "early land acquisition" activities in the Project Area by acquiring substantial parts of the Project Area and conducting relocation activities and demolition and clearance operations therein, all after the Authority had held a public hearing after due and proper notice, had received and heard extensive evidence, data, exhibits, views and opinions and had, in a resolution adopted May 3, 1961, made certain findings and conclusions concerning the buildings and conditions within said substantial parts of the Project Area; and

WHEREAS, an urban renewal plan for the Project Area has been prepared; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing on said urban renewal plan and project was, after due and proper notice thereof, held on April 17, 1963, at which the Authority received and heard extensive evidence, data, exhibits, views and opinions with respect thereto, and all persons desiring to be heard were so heard; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has considered said evidence, data, exhibits, views, and opinions and said findings and conclusions.

NOW THEREFORE, UPON CONSIDERATION THEREOF, BE IT RESOLVED

A. The Authority does hereby find and determine that an urban renewal project ought to be undertaken and carried out in the Project Area and that it is essential to the best interests of the Project and of the City of Boston that the boundaries of the Project Area be as described in Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part hereof;

B. That the Authority does hereby find and determine that the Project Area was immediately prior to the Authority's said early land acquisition activities in the Project Area and, except to the extent that conditions therein have been changed by said activities, now is a decadent area in that it is an area which is detrimental to safety, health, morals, welfare and the sound growth of the community because of one or more of the following reasons and conditions, namely, because of the existence of buildings which are out of repair, physically deteriorated, unfit for human habitation and obsolete, in need of major maintenance and repair, because buildings have been torn down and not replaced and in which under existing conditions it is improbable that the buildings will be replaced, because of a substantial change in business and economic conditions, because of inadequate light, air and open space, because of excessive land coverage, because diversity of ownership, irregular lot sizes and obsolete street patterns make it improbable that the area will be redeveloped by the ordinary operations of private enterprise;

C. That, more particularly, the Authority does hereby find and determine that the following conditions existed immediately prior to the Authority's said early land acquisition activities in the Project Area and, except to the extent that said conditions have been changed by said activities, continue to exist in the Project Area:

1. The Project Area is a tangle of narrow, congested streets, irregularly sized lots, and obsolete and substandard structures with little or no space between, characterized by marginal businesses, obsolete tenements, and economic stagnation and decline. Of the 605 acres in the Project Area, more than one-third (26.5 acres) consists of narrow streets, alleys and ill-defined squares, leaving a net balance of 34 acres which are solidly built-up, predominantly by commercial buildings which occupy close to 100 per cent of each block, except where demolition has resulted in parking lots.
2. The vacancy ratio in the portion of the downtown City area comprising the Project Area is 16.3 per cent--more than three times the estimated vacancy ratio in the downtown City area as a whole. Approximately 700,000 square feet out of the approximately 4,622,000 square feet contained in structures in the Project Area (exclusive of basements) stand vacant.
3. Most structures in the Project Area are obsolete and ill-adapted to contemporary use. Many of the nonresidential buildings were conversions from original residential uses, and many were designed for the nonresidential requirements of the 19th century. Mixed use structures are prevalent throughout the Project Area.
4. Dwelling unit density in the Project Area is high. 584 dwelling units occupy 44 acres of Project land, or an average of 131 dwelling units per net acre. For the most part, these dwelling units are contained in elevatorless row buildings three or four stories high, with, in many cases, the first floor devoted to stores and other commercial uses.
5. The Project Area is seriously deficient in community and recreational facilities. There are no schools or churches in the Area, and only one playground of 0.095 acres, as compared with National Recreational Association standards which would require playground areas totaling 5.40 acres for the estimated number of people able to live in the Project Area.

6. During the past 35 years only one new building has been built in the Project Area and 79 buildings have been demolished. About 78 per cent of the buildings in the Project Area were built prior to 1900 and about half of these (38 per cent of the total) were constructed more than 100 years ago. There is little or no likelihood that buildings will be replaced by the ordinary operations of private enterprise.

7. Over 90 per cent of the buildings in the Project Area are substandard under criteria approved by the Federal Government. Such buildings are distributed throughout the entire Project Area.

8. The Project Area presents a major fire control problem. Most of the structures were built before the City of Boston Fire Code was adopted. Only about 7.1 per cent of the present buildings are fire-proof or fire-resistive. In 95 or 25.1 per cent of the structures in the Project Area, combustible debris is accumulated to a degree constituting a serious fire hazard. Stairways that are not enclosed, which constitute a fire hazard, are found in 311 or 82.4 per cent of the structures in the Project Area. The construction of buildings out to the sidewalks and the narrow, congested streets with their sharp corners make it extremely difficult to move fire fighting equipment quickly and expeditiously to the scene of a fire within the Project Area. Traffic congestion and the lack of off-street loading facilities have been major obstacles to effective fire fighting. Most of the Project Area is within a so-called "congested value district" as designated by the National Board of Fire Underwriters. During the years 1959 and 1960, there was an average of one fire for every six buildings in the Project Area, which is more than five times the average for the City of Boston. And, of the fires within the Project Area, 5 per cent were major fires, as compared with an average of 2 per cent for the City. This high rate is due in large part to and aggravated by street and traffic conditions throughout the Project Area which hamper and delay the arrival of fire fighting apparatus.

9. Building and environmental deficiencies are numerous and widespread throughout the Project Area. 196 or 51.8 per cent of the structures in the Project Area have roofs which are deteriorated and in need of major repair. 170 or 44.9 per cent of the structures in the Project Area have walls which are deteriorated and in need of major repairs. 200 or 53 per cent of the structures have outside walls which have broken or loose surfaces or holes or badly worn surfaces and are in need of major repairs. 232 or 61.4 per cent of the structures have inside walls or ceilings which have cracks, holes, or badly worn surfaces. 240 or 63.9 per cent of the structures have evidence of leaks and/or missing plaster on inside walls or ceilings. 179 or 47.4 per cent of the structures in the Project Area are vermin infested, resulting in a health hazard. 148 or 39.1 per cent of the structures in the Project Area lack hot running water. 236 or 62.4 per cent of the structures in the Project Area contain exposed electrical wiring constituting a hazard. 286 or 75.7 per cent of the structures have floors that sag. 104 or 27.5 per cent of the structures have faulty foundations. 110 or 29.3 per cent of the structures have split or deteriorated framing. 141 or 37.3 per cent of the structures in the Project Area possess exposed electrical panels constituting a hazard. 258 or 68.3 per cent of the structures in the Project Area have obsolete plumbing. 177 or 46.8 per cent of the structures in the Project Area have toilets without proper ventilation. 49 or 13 per cent of the structures in the Project Area lack artificial lighting in public hallways, constituting a hazard. About 40 per cent of the lodging houses in the Project Area have lodging rooms which lack access to two means of egress, and about 75 per cent have less than one toilet for each eight (8) persons of licensed capacity.

10. The existing street patterns in the Project Area present very serious traffic control problems which cannot be solved adequately without a complete redevelopment of the entire Area:

Of the total length of streets (about 5.2 miles) in the Project Area, about one-third consists of roadways less than 28 feet in width and unable to

accommodate two lanes for traffic movement with parking on one side of the street. Many of the streets are too narrow for expeditious traffic movement, particularly because, due to the absence of off-street loading facilities, streets are used continuously for pickup and delivery purposes by trucks serving the commercial and business uses in the Area. Two hundred sixty-five or 98.8 per cent of the nonresidential structures in the Project Area lack off-street loading facilities. The pattern of streets within the Project Area is now obsolete, and this condition will be further aggravated with the completion of additional highway access to the Central Business District now under construction.

The Project Area has 82 street intersections, of which only 37 are right-angle intersections. Some of the intersections are large "squares" having as many as 10 intersections or entering streets, which are inherently dangerous to vehicular traffic as well as to pedestrians. The Area has a high accident experience.

The resulting traffic control problems cannot be solved by traffic signals and other traffic engineering means. It would be prohibitively expensive and inefficient to attempt to improve the street pattern by selective demolition of existing structures.

11. The Project Area has in recent years experienced substantial adverse changes in economic and business conditions. The total of real estate assessments in the Project Area decreased from around \$35,000,000 in 1946 to around \$24,000,000 in 1960. The number of private businesses in the Area and the number of persons employed in private enterprise in the Area have also decreased. These decreases in the Project Area have been substantially greater than those experienced in the City as a whole.

EXHIBIT A

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the intersection of the extended center line of Staniford Street with the extended northerly sideline of Merrimac Street;

Thence running in a southerly direction along the center line of Staniford Street to the intersection of the extended center line of Staniford Street extended to intersect with the southerly sideline of Cambridge Street;

Thence turning and running in an easterly direction along the southerly sideline of Cambridge Street to the intersection with the westerly sideline of Somerset Street;

Thence turning and running in a southerly direction along the westerly sideline of Somerset Street to the intersection with the extended northerly property line of the property known as the County Court House Annex;

Thence turning and running in an easterly direction by various courses and distances along the extended northerly property line and the northerly property line of the said County Court House Annex to a point which is the northeast corner of said property;

Thence turning and running in a southerly direction by various courses and distances along the easterly property line of the said County Court House Annex to the intersection with the northerly sideline of Pemberton Square;

Thence turning and running in a westerly and a southerly direction by various courses and distances along the northerly and westerly sidelines of Pemberton Square to the intersection with the extended northerly property line of the property known as 34 Pemberton Square - 39 Tremont Street;

Thence turning and running in an easterly and a southerly direction by various courses and distances along the extended northerly property line and the northerly property line of said 34 Pemberton Square - 39 Tremont Street across Tremont Street along said northerly property line extended to an intersection with the easterly sideline of Tremont Street;

Thence turning and running in a northerly direction along the easterly sideline of Tremont Street to the southwesterly corner of the property known as 10 Tremont Street;

Thence turning and running in an easterly direction along the southern property line of said 10 Tremont Street to the south-easterly corner of said property;

Thence turning and running in a northerly direction along the easterly property line of said 10 Tremont Street to the intersection with the southerly sideline of Court Street;

Thence turning and running in an easterly direction along the southerly sideline of Court Street to a point of intersection of said sideline extended with the northerly property line of the property known as the Old State House to the northeast corner of said property;

Thence turning and running in a southerly direction along the easterly property line of said Old State House to the southeast corner of said property;

Thence turning and running in an easterly direction along the extended southerly property line of said Old State House to the northerly property line of the property known as 31-33 State Street, which is also the southerly sideline of State Street, and continuing along the southerly sideline of State Street to an intersection with the extended easterly sideline of Change Avenue;

Thence turning and running in a northerly direction along the extended easterly sideline and the easterly sideline of Change Avenue to an intersection with the northerly property line of the property known as 60 State Street;

Thence turning and running in an easterly direction by various courses and distances along the northerly property line of said 60 State Street and continuing in an easterly direction along the northerly property line of the property known as 80 State Street and the last said property line extended in an easterly direction to an intersection with the easterly sideline of Merchants Row;

Thence turning and running in a northerly direction along the extended easterly sideline of Merchants Row to an intersection with the southerly property line of the property known as 1-3 South Market Street, which is also the northerly sideline of Chatham Street;

Thence turning and running in a westerly direction along the southerly property line of said 1-3 South Market Street to an intersection with the easterly sideline of Merchants Row;

Thence turning and running in a northerly direction along the westerly property line of said 1-3 South Market Street, which is also the easterly sideline and extended easterly sideline of Merchants Row, to an intersection with the extended southerly property line of the property known as Faneuil Hall;

Thence turning and running in a westerly direction along the extended southerly property line and the southerly property line of said Faneuil Hall to an intersection with the westerly property line of said building;

Thence turning and running in a northerly direction along the westerly property line and extended property line of said Faneuil Hall extended to an intersection with the northwesterly sideline of North Street;

Thence turning and running in a southwesterly direction along the northerly sideline of North Street to an intersection with the easterly sideline of Union Street;

Thence turning and running in a northerly direction along the easterly sideline of Union Street to an intersection with the southerly sideline of Hanover Street;

Thence turning and running in a northeasterly direction along the southerly sideline of Hanover Street to an intersection with the westerly sideline of Blackstone Street;

Thence turning and running in a northwesterly direction along the extended westerly sideline and the westerly sideline of Blackstone Street, which is also a State Highway location layout line, to the end of Blackstone Street at Haymarket Square;

Thence turning and running in a northeasterly and a northwesterly direction by various courses and distances along the State Highway location layout line to the southeasterly corner of the property of the City of Boston known as the Haymarket Relief Station;

Thence running in a northwesterly direction by various courses and distances along the northeasterly property line of said Haymarket Relief Station to an intersection with the easterly sideline of Canal Street, which is also the westerly property line of said Haymarket Relief Station;

Thence turning and running in a southeasterly direction along the easterly sideline of Canal Street to an intersection with the extended northerly sideline of Market Street;

Thence turning and running along the extended northerly sideline and the northerly sideline of Market Street to an intersection with the northeasterly sideline of Merrimac Street;

Thence turning and running in a northwesterly direction along the northerly sideline of Merrimac Street to the point of beginning.

